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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT: VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN IN CHILE

¶1. Summary: Vice President Biden's participation at the March 27-28 Progressive Governance Summit in Vina del Mar and his bilateral with President Bachelet in Santiago produced extremely positive media coverage in Chile. Articles and TV news highlighted Biden's stature as the "second man in the White House," the close U.S.-Chile relationship, and his state visit after the Summit. The press noted his comments about the region, reflecting a "genuine" desire to "listen" to Latin America and take part in an open dialogue. The coverage portrayed the Vice President as a candid and proactive leader who clearly conveyed the message that the United States has entered a new stage in its relations with Latin America. The coverage of the Vice President and his wife's private activities also resulted in positive and colorful photo coverage. End Summary.

Vice President Biden at La Moneda

¶2. Headline: "Biden Announces 'New Alliance' with Region after Meeting with Bachelet"

At the dinner after the bilateral meeting with Bachelet, U.S. Vice President Jose Biden emphasized that his visit to Chile is "just the beginning of a renewal of an alliance with the Americas." In the morning at the Summit in Vina, Biden had already offered to start a new relationship with Latin America.

¶3. At the dinner, Biden marked a strong difference with the previous administration: "The time when the United States unilaterally acts and does not listen is over," he said. The Vice President also stated Chile is one of the closest allies the White House has in the region, adding that his country hopes to strengthen cooperation and "make use of your good advice." One of the topics addressed by Bachelet at the dinner was President Obama's invitation to visit Washington. At the dinner, however it was confirmed that the meeting will take place soon. The Vice President said that President Obama was "anxious to meet with her" (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 3/29).

¶4. At the joint press conference with Vice President Biden, Bachelet said that the U.S. official's visit "Is a very strong sign about the determination to build a new political environment so that we can all, together, quickly overcome the global crisis." The Chilean President also valued the "genuine desire of the United States to play a proactive role and in establishing a new global dialogue, which Chile believes is urgently needed." She added: "the signals that the United States is sending to the world are the right ones," those that Chile was hoping to see. "Your trip to Latin America, just two weeks before the Summit of the Americas, shows you are willing to you listen and share views, and look for opportunities to build agreements. This marks a new day in the relationship between the United States with Latin America," said Bachelet (Government of Chile webpage, 3/29).

¶5. At 7:50 pm, Biden arrived at La Moneda to meet with Bachelet. Reportedly, in that meeting Biden confirmed that Bachelet and President Obama will meet bilaterally at the Summit of the Americas

in Trinidad and Tobago. Biden said Chile is "one of the closest partners of the United States in the region" (El Mercurio, 3/29).

¶16. Captioned photo: As part of the GOC effort to commemorate the world's energy-saving "Earth Hour," Bachelet hosted a candlelight dinner for U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden (El Mercurio, 3/29).

¶17. Captioned photograph of the dinner at La Moneda for Vice President Biden: "Under a soft candlelight... the Big Boss (Bachelet) and the gringo Vice President enjoyed dinner together (La Cuarta, popular tabloid, 3/29).

Progressive Governance Summit in Vina Del Mar

¶18. Photograph of the Chilean President, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Brazilian President Lula da Silva, and Vice President Biden closing the summit: "Bachelet closed the Progressive Governance Summit paraphrasing Obama: 'Yes, we can!!!!'" (Las Ultimas Noticias, leading-circulation, popular, circ. 140,000, 3/29).

¶19. At the press conference, the Chilean President said the government of the United States "can count on the government of Chile to work enthusiastically in the urgent task of facing global and regional challenges and respond to what people expect from us: governments that can resolve people's problems" (Government of Chile webpage, 3/28).

¶110. At the end of the summit, Vice President Biden noted his country would not lift the embargo on Cuba for now. Biden said the island must begin a democratic transition led by Cubans themselves. "We believe that Cubans must be the ones to determine their fate and whether they live free with the opportunity of economic prosperity," added Biden (El Mercurio, 3/29).

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¶111. Headline: "Dinner for world leaders at Cerro Castillo" Photographs of Bachelet with the President of Brazil, the British Prime Minister, and Vice President Joe Biden "who will have a state visit" (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 3/28)

¶112. Headline: "U.S. Vice President says at end of summit that this country would not lift the embargo on Cuba" Subheadline: Bachelet met with Biden at 19:50. Biden said Chile "is one of its (the U.S.) closest partners in the region" (El Mercurio, 3/29).

¶113. Vice President Biden is right now the highest-ranking Obama official in Latin America. Biden held bilateral meetings with the Presidents of Uruguay and Argentina, where he emphasized the desire of the new U.S. administration to improve its ties with the region, which deteriorated during the Bush administration (El Mostrador, 3/28).

¶114. On Friday, Vice President Biden told Argentine President Cristina Fernandez that President Obama is willing to discuss all issues concerning the region at the upcoming Summit of the Americas. Biden and Fernandez met for about an hour at the Sheraton Hotel (Reuters, 3/28).

Arrival in Chile

¶115. Photograph of Vice President Biden as he descended from the airplane: "U.S. Vice President and British Prime Minister Already in Chile" Subheadline: The U.S. Vice President arrived at 1:50 am and left for Vina where the Summit will take place (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon, circ. 33,000, 3/27).

¶116. The presence of the second highest-ranking White House official in Chile marks a new stage in U.S. international relations. President Clinton was one of the founders of the Progressive Governance Summit, but George Bush was never invited to participate in any of them (El Mostrador on-line news agency, 3/28).

¶17. Captioned photograph of the Vice President as he walked down the airplane staircase: "Biden up early" U.S. Vice President Joe Biden arrived close to 2am on Friday. Biden did not make any remarks and traveled to Vina directly in a 15-car motorcade (Las Ultimas Noticias, leading-circulation, popular, circ. 140,000, 3/28).

¶18. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown arrived in Chile to participate in the summit.... Other cools guys at the Summit were the chiefs of government of Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and also the Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden (La Cuarta, popular tabloid, 3/28).

¶19. The President of the Spanish government, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, will meet tomorrow with several progressive leaders and with the Vice President of the United States, Joseph Biden. This will be Zapatero's first personal encounter with an Obama administration official (Europa Press, 3/27).

Dr. Biden's Activities

¶20. The Vice President's wife, Jill Biden, visited the home of poet Pablo Neruda, "La Sebastiana," in Valparaiso, which is now a museum. Articles ran photos of Dr. Biden at the museum with writer Antonio Skarmeta and the Museum Director Elisa Figueroa. As she left, Dr. Biden said, "It's a beautiful and interesting place. It was a great visit" (Agencia Bolivariana de Noticias, 3/28; El Mercurio, 3/29; La Tercera, 3/29; Tercera on-line, Mercurio on-line, 3/29; El Mostrador, 3/29; La Segunda, 3/28).

¶21. Chile's leading newspapers published photographs of the Vice President and his wife after a mass they attended at the Saint Georges School. The articles noted they talked to and offered fruit juice to the children at the school (El Mercurio and La Tercera, 3/30).

SIMONS